

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I would like to testify against HB 6355 and in favor HB 6491.

I appose HB 6355 because it removes all due process and infringes on constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Under proposed law it will be possible to use mere allegation without need to substantiate to deny fundamental rights of self-defense to a person. Furthermore it puts unreasonable burden on a person to prove that he/she is no longer a threat to themself or others. Considering that there might not have been a verifiable threat, it is very hard to prove that such threat no longer exists. The burden of proof should not be with the accused but should always be with the prosecution. I am not a jurist, but I believe that presumption of innocence is a cornerstone of the American legal system.

This bill opens a door to maliciously false accusations. Consider a case of a woman who terminated a relationship with an abusive boyfriend. She purchases a gun to protect herself from her former partner. Under proposed law he can file paperwork claiming that she is a danger to herself and have her gun confiscated. I can easily see the scenario where this law will disproportionately victimize minority groups and women of color.

CT already has a mechanism where guns could be removed after proper investigation. This preserves the rights of gun owners and establishes due process.

I would also want to express my support for HB 6491. It seems self evident that we should encourage use of non lethal self defense weapons. At the very least it will bring CT in compliance with supreme court ruling from 2016 and will give options to people who can not afford to get a permit and purchase a gun.

Sincerely,

Michael Levin
New Canaan